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The system of conscription, if established in England, would thus be brought nearer to our own land and its malign influence spread far and wide. Enforced military training has already a large number of advocates, who are seeking every opportunity to promote the militarizing of the youth of this free democratic country. The evil effects of conscription are but too clearly seen in the countries of Europe. It is an illogical and intolerable system, and every right-minded person should protest with vigor and persistence against it in every form.

The Fundamental Question in Mexico.

The conflict between international law, pecuniary interests, and common ethics makes it extremely difficult to speak dogmatically of the present situation in Mexico. Since the execution of Maximilian, in 1867, the history of Mexico has until most recently revolved around Porfirio Diaz, who ousted his predecessor and became President in 1877. Under the ruthless despotism of this tyrant Mexico was reduced to a condition of industrial peace, but her people to a blighting slavery. The reaction against this despotism found expression in the Maderist movement in the north of Mexico—a movement which finally unseated Diaz and sent him from the country. Madero, scholar and idealist, set himself the task of restoring order in the place of anarchy. He was shot to death, however, before the world had time to judge him fairly. By what is called a “coup d'état” in some quarters General Huerta became the head of the professional army at the capital, and of the government itself.

The United States has watched the conduct of affairs in that unhappy country with increasing concern. The Maderists under General Carranza in the north seem to be increasing in power, and the issue between tyranny and democracy is becoming more clearly drawn. The Wilson administration has refused to recognize General Huerta. It ordered a presidential election there, with instructions to General Huerta that he must not be a candidate for the place. Other demands have been made by our Government that constitute technically acts of intervention. In a sense they have been in violation of the Hague Convention of 1899 and of the principle of international law that each state is an independent sovereignty. It is directly counter to the principle that intervention can be admitted only upon one ground and that of self-preservation.

Fundamentally, however, the question in Mexico is not one of protection for our citizens there. It is not a question of the rights of property and property interests, established ruthlessly by the iniquitous system of “concessions.” It is not a question whether the present dictator of Mexico is or is not a murderer. It is not a question of party politics. It is not even a question of international law. It is rather the ages-old question of what can best be done to overcome peonage, to raise the Mexican people out of serfdom, to promote self-government in a country stifled by worse than a feudal tyranny.

There can be no good government but self-government in Mexico or anywhere else. General Huerta is undoubtedly in the way of the onward growth of such government in Mexico. The ultimate question, therefore, is, How far has the United States a duty in the premises? Our frank answer to this question is, We do not know. The Government itself does not seem to know. Of this we are convinced, however, that the motives of the Administration are of the highest. Only time can reveal the wisdom of its course.

A Sunday for Peace.

For twenty-one years a Sunday has been set apart by the leaders of the peace movement for the special consideration, by Christian churches, of the cause of international friendship and amity. Peace Sunday was instituted by the Second International Peace Congress in 1890, on the suggestion of the Peace Society, London. From that time the Sunday before Christmas has been each year observed by English peacemakers as a day for prayer and the exposition of the principles of peace and good will. Large amounts of literature have been distributed among religious teachers, and many discourses have been pronounced on the subject of peace year after year in the churches of Great Britain, and on some special occasions there have been many thousands of sermons preached on that day. Within the last four or five years more attention has been given to this Sunday among the European churches than heretofore.

In America Peace Sunday has been observed regularly for twenty years on the third Sabbath of December. The peace societies of the United States have each year made an effort to induce the ministers of the country to give serious attention to the great cause of the abolition of war. On special occasions many thousands of preachers have delivered eloquent discourses on the topic, and in certain parts of the country the day has been regularly observed by the clergy.

But the success of the effort has as a rule not been very encouraging. Indeed, in not a few pulpits the subject of peace has been studiously avoided, or not infrequently scoffed at, and war glorified upon occasion as if it were the utmost concern of the Prince of Peace. A change, however, is steadily though slowly taking place, and one may venture to believe that some day the Christian church will have become genuinely Christianized and every Sunday the world over a Peace Sunday.

This year the day falls on December 21, the Sunday before Christmas. It is an unusually appropriate time for the celebration. The message of “peace on earth among men of good will” needs redoubled emphasis. The minds of men, in large numbers at any rate, are unusually turned toward war at the present moment.

The recent terrible tragedies in the Balkans, the state of turbulence and bloodshed in Mexico, the determination of the great powers to pile up armaments without limit, the turning of the very boys of certain countries to the universal spirit and cultivation of war—these leave little room for self-satisfaction and encouragement. There is urgent necessity for peace propaganda everywhere. The churches must be roused from their apathy and indifference. It is estimated that at least one hundred million people call themselves Christians. War might be abolished forever, possibly within a twelve-month, and the nations learn war no more, if these Christian millions could only be induced to act like real Christians for a single year.

Human Slavery and War.

There is an interesting parallelism between the two great movements for abolition, the abolition of human slavery and the abolition of war.

Viewing in the large, for example, the abolition of slavery, we find commercial traffic in African slaves beginning far back in the dim early days of the 15th century along the shores of southern Europe. It was extended later by the Spaniards in South and Central America, and because of certain changes in the government of early Virginia we find human slavery strangely beginning in North America the same year with the beginning of our democratic institutions, namely, in 1619. This barbaric establishment of slavery on the shores of the James, and extending through the 17th century, we may call the first stage of African slavery in America, the stage of the long, slow rise.

Secondly, largely through the influence of such Quakers as John Woolman, Benjamin Lundy, and others, the public conscience was awakened in opposition to this wholly unreasonable thing. The movement for emancipation became organized across the country. Anti-slavery societies began. The spirit of democracy found itself vigorously in conflict with the unnatural institution. In consequence slavery disappeared utterly in the northern colonies. It was forbidden by the ordinance of 1787 in the Northwest Territory. Indeed, it came to look as if the institution was doomed, even in the Southland. These clear evidences of the decline of slavery may be said to mark the second stage of the march toward its abolition, the stage of the apparent decline.

Then, further, with the invention of the cotton-gin in 1793, and the phenomenal development of cotton growing as a profitable industry in the South, slavery in that section took on a new life, arose rapidly in economic importance, and became a cherished and generally accepted part of Southern life and policy. But so rapid was its development and so threatening its influence that history witnesses another and still more pronounced movement—a decided opposition shown in Benjamin Lundy's anti-slavery societies, begun in 1815, and his abolition paper, first published in 1821; in William Lloyd Garrison, touched by the new spirit; in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," written in the 50's; in Abraham Lincoln. The cancer of slavery was surgically cut from the body of our national life in the 60's. Thus we have the record of a

most rapid growth of slavery, alongside which develops the movement for abolition to a successful conclusion. We may call this the third and last step—the step of the rapid growth of slavery and its sudden end.

View briefly the movement toward the abolition of war. The year that Benjamin Lundy began the organization of anti-slavery societies—the year 1815—marks the beginning also of the rise of peace societies. There had been the American Revolution, the French Revolution, the scourge of Napoleon, the War of 1812, and the world was sick of war. In that year three peace societies were born—the first in New York, the next in Ohio, the third in Massachusetts. The American Peace Society grew out of a meeting of the Maine Peace Society held February 10, 1826. The first constitution of the National Peace Society was drawn by William Ladd, corresponding secretary of the Massachusetts Peace Society, one of the really great men of the last century, the Benjamin Lundy of the peace movement. As the first step of slavery represented its long, slow rise, so there was a long, slow rise of militarism in this country and abroad, against which worked the peace movement, a process analogous in a measure at least to the first step in the development of human slavery.

Then, secondly, the peace principle spread rapidly. Great international peace congresses in the 50's engaged the best representative minds of civilized lands. As with slavery in the 18th century, so war seemed about to die in the 19th. This surely was a step of apparent decline of militarism.

Thirdly, and last, because of the rise of modern inventions, the lust for great wealth, the crystallization of great corporations for production and transportation, the greed for empire, the forgetfulness of all connected with war except its glories, the perfection of fighting machines, the activities of the militarists, and the self-sufficiency of the nations—because of these, militarism as an institution has within the last generation developed enormously. By its sheer size we see it riveting the attention of the Czar of Russia, bringing forth The Hague conference, starting the machinery of the governments to the upbuilding of international tribunals and other agencies as possible substitutes for this militarism. As a matter of common knowledge, militarism is more powerful today than ever before. Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Russia, and the United States are spending in one year 165 per cent more for the military and navy branches of government than they did 30 years ago. And to what purpose? We believers in the irrational iniquity of war dare to hope that we are at the last great step in this world's greatest political movement, the period of the rapid rise of militarism presaging its inevitable doom.

Thus, we may repeat, slavery seems to have presented three rather clearly defined periods—that of a long, slow rise; that of an apparent decline, and that of a rapid development and final death. War as a system of settling international disputes seems to reveal three similar phases—that of a long, slow rise, ending with the 18th century; that of apparent decline, ending just before the Civil War, and, finally, that of rapid development, apparent to us all of this present generation.

It is interesting to note in this connection that there is no disagreement over the ethics of the incongruous and barbaric situation of the nations concerning this